

F.I.R.S.T.



Foodborne **I**llness **R**esponse **S**trategy for Michigan

Michigan Department of Community Health
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Purpose of the Guide

A successful foodborne illness outbreak investigation requires **teamwork**. Regardless of the outbreak size, investigators need to draw upon the expertise of staff members from disciplines as diverse as epidemiology, food science, environmental sanitation, nursing, and microbiology.

This guide has been developed to:

- Clarify current Michigan roles and responsibilities and legal requirements for agencies involved with foodborne illness surveillance and investigation,
- Promote data collection, information sharing, coordination and collaboration among local and state agencies and individuals,
- Promote consistency in surveillance and investigative methods by outlining a general approach for Michigan agencies,
- Promote and encourage a multidisciplinary approach between public health nursing, environmental health and laboratorians during surveillance or foodborne illness outbreak investigations, whether it be a large or small health department, and
- Answer commonly asked questions from local health department staff concerning foodborne illness surveillance and investigation.

The most important reason for investigating incidents of foodborne illness is to identify how disease is being spread so that actions can be taken to prevent the occurrence of further illness.

How to Use This Guide

The guide is not exhaustive nor is it intended to be a substitute for more complete references or training in foodborne illness surveillance and investigation.

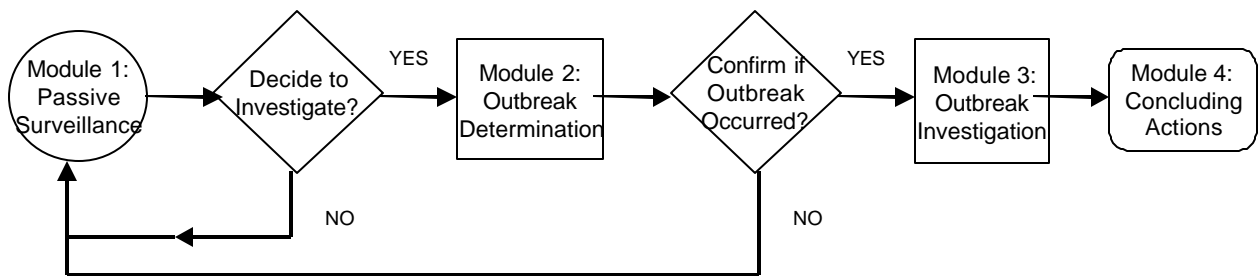
The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) and Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) encourage all staff involved in foodborne illness surveillance and outbreak investigation to have easy access to the following key references:

- **Control of Communicable Diseases Manual**, 17th Edition, James Chin, Editor, published by the American Public Health Association
- **IAMFES Procedures to Investigate Foodborne Illness**, 5th Edition, published by the International Association of Food Protection.
- **MDCH Guide to Laboratory Services** (Blue Binder) – see <http://www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/bofi/> for online version.
- **American Academy of Pediatrics**, 25th Edition, 2000 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases (Red Book)

Foodborne Illness Surveillance, Investigation and Control

For simplicity in communicating basic principles, the process of foodborne illness surveillance, investigation, and control is divided into four phases or “modules”. These modules are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Overview of Foodborne Illness Surveillance, Investigation, and Control



- Tasklists have been provided that highlights many of the actions to be taken. Because every investigation is unique, these should be used as investigation guidelines and not blueprints.
- A chapter on laboratory procedures has been developed to assist investigators to collect and submit appropriate samples.
- Detailed information that applies to one or more chapters has been placed in appendices.
- References are provided at the end of the document to identify where additional information is available.
- These materials are intended to be used by individuals who have attended the MDCH/MDA training program that provides additional information.

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